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### **Coalition Urges Policymakers, Insurance Commissioners and Others to Keep Health Care Competition**

WASHINGTON DC – With large insurance mergers Anthem/Cigna and Aetna/Humana threatening consumers' access to health care as well as health insurance affordability, a group of consumer advocates, employers and unions today launched the Coalition to Protect Patient Choice (CPPC) along with a website – [www.thecppc.com](http://www.thecppc.com). The group aims to educate policymakers and the public on the importance of keeping health care competition.

"Health insurance markets are already highly concentrated throughout the United States, and typically dominated by either one or two incumbent insurers," said Mark Cooper, Research Director for the Consumer Federation of America. "The combination of Anthem and Cigna and Aetna and Humana will further weaken the feeble competition in a large number of insurance markets. It is incumbent upon federal and state enforcers and regulators to review these mergers with the utmost scrutiny. The coalition will provide tools and valuable information to facilitate review of these mergers, as well as offer information and analysis of other health care competition concerns."

"Consumers throughout the country are facing fewer choices and higher costs because of a tsunami of mergers and anticompetitive conduct," said Ken McEldowney of Consumer Action. "Our coalition plans to put a spotlight on this conduct so enforcers and policy makers can do their job in protecting consumers. We are starting by taking a hard look at the ongoing health insurance mergers, which threaten to reduce consumer choice and increase premiums. But we plan to go on to look at other areas where consumers are paying more for less choice."

"DC 37 represents 121,000 public sector employees in NYC," said Henry Garrido, Executive Director of DC 37, a major New York City public employee union. "Many are low paid and struggle every day to make ends meet. Our union prides itself on providing a low cost generic-based prescription drug benefit to our members, retirees and their families. However, our ability to continue to provide this important and often life-saving benefit has been challenged as never before. We applaud the work of the Coalition to Protect Patient Choice. We need more advocates like CPPC to help us fight against anti-consumer practices that harm workers everywhere."

Today, there are only five national competitors – UnitedHealth, Anthem, Cigna, Aetna and Humana. This makes health insurance markets already highly consolidated and insurance premiums are increasing because of it. The Department of Justice, State Attorneys Generals, State Insurance Commissioners and Congress are investigating the Anthem/Cigna and Aetna/Humana mergers.

The CPPC believes these mergers should be challenged or patient choice will suffer. In fact, studies have shown previous health insurance mergers resulted in increases ranging from 7 percent to nearly 14 percent. The argument that health insurers drive down health costs has no impact on consumers -- historically, no savings are passed along to consumers. Instead, insurance costs rise for employers, individuals and families.

The website – [www.thecppc.com](http://www.thecppc.com) – will provide resources for policy makers, enforcement officials, the press and the public to educate and inform the debate about these mergers. The website includes a U.S. map showing states that will experience the greatest health insurance challenges should the mergers be allowed as well as additional resources including studies, fact sheets, Congressional hearing highlights and more.

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### ***ABOUT CPPC***

CPPC cares about health care competition so consumers can keep their choice of caregiver, needed prescriptions and other elements essential to individual health. With large insurance mergers threatening access and affordability, the CPPC is a group of consumer advocates uniting to fight these big mergers and protect patient choice. Learn more at [www.thecppc.com](http://www.thecppc.com).